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HEAD START, WEST VIRGINIA, SUMMER 1966--A SEVEN-COUNTY OVERVIEW, A SPECIAL ASSIGNMENT OF THE WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF MENTAL HEALTH.

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PROJECT HEAD START (HS), FEDERALLY-SUPPORTED AND OPERATING UNDER FEDERAL REGULATIONS WHICH PERMITTED NO MORE THAN 10 PERCENT OF ENROLLED CHILDREN TO BE FROM FAMILIES WITH INCOMES ABOVE THE PRESCRIBED POVERTY LEVEL, WAS CONDUCTED DURING THE SUMMER OF 1966 IN ALL 55 WEST VIRGINIA COUNTIES. IN 7 OF THESE COUNTIES, SUPPLEMENTARY STATE FUNDS WERE ALLOCATED IN ORDER TO PERMIT ENROLLMENT OF CHILDREN WHO, BECAUSE OF FAMILY INCOME IN EXCESS OF THE POVERTY LEVEL, WERE NOT OTHERWISE ELIGIBLE FOR HS PARTICIPATION. A PROGRAM OF EVALUATIVE RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED TO COMPARE THE BENEFITS DERIVED FROM HS BY ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN AND BY THOSE FROM MORE AFFLUENT HOMES. THE CALDWELL ACHIEVEMENT TEST AND THE DRAW-A-PERSON TEST, SELECTED AS MEETING THE BASIC CRITERIA OF ECONOMY, BREVITY, AND EASE OF ADMINISTRATION, WERE ADMINISTERED TO 675 CHILDREN. TEST RESULTS ARE REPORTED IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL EVALUATION WHICH CONCLUDES THAT ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN ARE CLEARLY DEFICIENT IN ACHIEVEMENT AND INTELLECTUAL FUNCTIONING WHEN COMPARED WITH CHILDREN FROM FAMILIES WITH INCOMES ABOVE THE POVERTY LEVEL. THE PROJECT REPORT CITES THE NEED FOR MORE EXTENSIVE PRESCHOOL EDUCATION PROGRAMS AS A MEANS OF PROVIDING COMPENSATORY PREPARATION FOR ECONOMICALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN. (JS)

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HEAD START

West Virginia, Summer, 1966

A Seven-County Overview:

A Special Assignment of

The West Virginia Department of Mental Health

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Head Start, West Virginia, Summer, 1966.

A Seven-County Overview:

An Introduction to a Special Assignment of the West Virginia Department of Mental Health

Louise B. Gerrard, Research Analyst

As we drove along a country road early one morning we saw a barefoot child coming down a steep mountain path. A woman stood in the doorway of an unpainted frame house, watching. She held an infant in her arms; another was clutching at her blue skirt. There seemed to be no other houses in the area, no other people in sight. When the child reached the road, he turned and waved up to his mother, then sat down on a rock to wait for the school bus.

In another part of the state we drove past neat farm houses where smoke rose from brick chimneys into the cool early morning air. Children, dogs, chickens and geese all seemed to be scrambling in noisy profusion at the bus stop. A man on horseback rode up, deposited a laughing little girl in starched pink dress, pink socks and white shoes, and rode off.

A school bus stopped at the entrance to a city school. Several children immediately pushed out and ran for the swings and see-saws in the playground, shouting: "Me first! Me First!" One small boy, clutching a plastic pencil box, stood at the door of the bus but did not step down until a teacher's aide held out her hand to him. A girl in a pale yellow pinafore remained in her seat even after the driver called: "All right now, everybody out!" The child allowed the teacher's aide to lead her from the bus, but stood at the side of the playground, staring fixedly down at the gravel path, not moving even when the bell rang and her classmates crowded past her into the building.

The Assignment

These were some of the children in West Virginia's Project Head Start we saw during July and August, 1966. Head Start was operating in all 55 counties (for the second year) with federal funds, under regulations which permitted 10% of the children to be from families above the poverty level. In seven of these counties, however, Governor Hulett Smith had made special state funds available to permit the schools to enroll larger numbers of children from families with incomes above the poverty level.

The assignment of the Department of Mental Health from the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity: Visit representative Head Start centers in these seven counties. Test a sampling of the children, both the OEO (federally-sponsored) and the State (Governor's special fund). Evaluate their performance and their potential. Observe the classes. Tell us what you find. Tell us whether you feel the extra state money was well spent.

The Department of Mental Health was pleased with the assignment. As part of our planning for comprehensive community mental health services, the Department's staff has been meeting with people throughout the state, asking about specific needs and seeking out ways in which these needs are being or could be met.

Some of the most persistent cries for help throughout this planning period have come from school teachers and principals who have emotionally disturbed children in their classes and do not know how to cope with them. Others speak about children who are not responding to regular school programs and are being frozen out even before they drop out. Some are aware that children are being labelled as retarded when they are, instead, from

deprived backgrounds where they have not developed the skills necessary to succeed in school but could develop them if given the opportunity early enough in life.

We see in our state mental hospitals and clinics many men and women who probably would not be patients if their problems had been recognized in childhood, and skilled help offered. We are in agreement with current studies which show a close relationship between certain kinds of mental illness and a childhood spent in deprivation and neglect.

For all these reasons, and because we want to understand the mentally healthy child as well as the child who might be mentally ill, we agreed to do the testing. In spite of the fact that we would have preferred a longer period of preparation, we were on the road within 10 days, visiting the first school on our list.

The Team

M. Mitchell-Bateman, M.D., Director of the Department of Mental Health; Robert D. Kerns, Ph.D., Associate Supervisor, Division of Professional Services, a psychologist; and Louise B. Gerrard, M.A., Research Analyst, by professional training a sociologist and writer, set up the special testing program in cooperation with Miss Elizabeth DePaulo, Head Start Coordinator in the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity.

The Department had on its staff for the summer months a number of college students who were becoming acquainted with the mental health field and the various professions essential to a well-functioning mental health

program. As in previous years, it was the Department's hope that some of these young people would be attracted to the work and would return to it as professionals after appropriate training.

Eleven of these students (regularly enrolled at West Virginia and Marshall Universities, West Virginia State and Morris Harvey College, Fisk University in Tennessee and Ohio State University and Oberlin College in Ohio) were selected for participation in the special program. An additional member of the traveling team was a young teacher in the Monongalia County school system who was on the summer staff of the Charleston Day Care Center (for retarded children), and free during the two-week vacation period at the Center.

These twelve young people and Mrs. Gerrard, the research analyst, became the traveling team. (List at end of this report.)

The Counties and Their Schools

The special Head Start program supported by state as well as Federal funds was functioning in seven counties: Barbour, Braxton, Cabell, Grant, McDowell, Raleigh, and Wetzel. The counties were well-distributed geographically, reaching into all sections of the state; their residents represented urban and rural, farm and non-farm, white and Negro, employed and unemployed, economically privileged and economically deprived.

Schools ranged from newly-built, well-designed, cheerful brick buildings with adequate play space and excellent equipment, to gloomy, poorly-planned structures which almost certainly were already in disrepair when the parents of the present students were in school.

The Children

The children looked like a cross-section of five- and six-year olds: aggressive, shy, noisy, withdrawn, laughing and crying, self-reliant and dependent. Some we saw were rosy-cheeked, bursting with energy, ready models for pictures of Typical American Child, dressed in well-styled clothes, with sturdy teeth and sparkling clear skin. Others - occasionally in the same school - were prototypes of the Hollow children shown in recruiting programs for Vista, or in lay-outs for magazine articles on the Shame of America. Small, under-nourished bodies already showed the marks of poverty, with an occasional misshapen foot (not properly set after a fall down the mountain), a hare lip never given medical attention, and mouths - many, many mouths - filled with rotting teeth and infected gums.

But everywhere: the incomparable laughter of children, the free, irrepressible gaiety and the easy camaraderie of pre-schoolers having a wonderful time.

The Need

Wherever we went in these seven counties - to twenty-six centers and more than 100 classrooms - we asked: "Do you think Head Start is a good idea? Do you think it should continue?"

The answer was always the same: "Of course it is a good idea. Of course it must continue." Sometimes teachers and principals appeared puzzled. Why were we asking about the obvious?

Those who had participated in Head Start the first summer (1965) said its worth had already been proven. "We kept back fewer children than we

usually do in first grade," said a principal. "Head Start made the difference."

A first grade teacher told us she could tell the first week of school which children had been to Head Start. "The Head Start children were ready for school. The others were not," she said. "Having so many Head Start children meant I could get much more done last year in first grade. It was the best year I have had in 18 years of teaching."

But principals and teachers warned against the quick assumption that for many children six weeks of Head Start would be the Magic Key to success in first grade and in school. Reported one teacher: "We have children here who have never been away from their families before, not for one night in camp or for one evening with a baby-sitter. They have no idea how to get along with others." Another teacher told us he had many children who were so confused by being away from home that it took all six weeks of Head Start sessions to get them to say a single word. "And for some last year, it took Head Start and then the whole year in first grade before they would trust us enough to let us reach them."

A Special Word About the Less Needy

It was difficult to learn in most counties the family income of the non-OEO child, or the father's occupation and education. These last two items, father's occupation and education, have proven to be the most reliable indices to a child's success in school. (In reality, Head Start was established to help overcome the predictability of these items!)

Schools concentrated - correctly - on setting up classes. When the Department of Mental Health re-tests the same children in the spring of 1967, appropriate socio-economic data will be secured for all, OEO and state.

Interviews with teachers, parents and others helped us determine the socio-economic backgrounds of many of the children; driving around the school districts we saw the sections from which the children came. In general, each of the seven counties enrolled boys and girls from all economic groups. We met children of professional people - doctors, college professors, engineers; of industrial personnel - including a plant manager and a director of personnel; of businessmen - department store owners, buyer for a chain of automobile supply stores; children of mine operators and of well-to-do farmers.

These middle-class children were not evenly distributed throughout the classes because they tended to live in or near urban centers. Some schools, therefore, had what one college student on the testing team called "A middle-class flavor."

Because 10% of those enrolled in the federally-sponsored program could be from higher income families, some of these middle-class children were actually listed as OEO. Although the designation is accurate for accounting purposes, it is misleading for analysis of educational, social and other needs. This point will be discussed further in the section of this report dealing with test results.

Other children listed as State children were actually in approximately the same socio-economic group as OEO children. For example, in one county a child whose father was a miner earning $500 a year more than an OEO classmate's father, also a miner, was considered a State child because all OEO places had already been filled when he enrolled.

In many schools, every child we talked with could be considered a culturally deprived child, or at least one who had special needs to be met by Head Start, although some were listed as OEO and some as State. In a very few schools, even the OEO children did not seem particularly deprived.

These Were the Neediest

Many children entering school are from such deprived backgrounds that their first school experience comes almost too late unless special programs are provided for them and their families. Some particular problems:

- children from isolated homes, unaccustomed to being outside their immediate family group;
- children from homes where parents have had little education themselves and see little need for education for their children;*
- children from homes which may not have a single book (except, perhaps, the Bible), and no newspapers or magazines at all, homes in which the child has never seen anyone in the family read a book or write a letter;
- children from homes where no one is gainfully employed, where, indeed, no one has worked in the child's lifetime. Some children have never known anyone - anyone - who was earning a living;

*A dramatic change in attitude has taken place in some families where fathers on Welfare rolls are being given special literacy training. Once they begin to go to school, they see to it that their children also go regularly. Teachers report marked improvement in attendance and performance on the part of children whose fathers are in special classes. We were in one school when "the fathers' class", as it was called, decided to have a spelling bee, with the losers buying cokes for the winners at recess time. One child ran down the hall announcing excitedly: "Daddy's team won!"

- children from homes where there is a great deal of sickness, where the child is needed on school days to care for others, or where the child himself is often sick and therefore absent from school.

Why so afraid?

Some are frightened by school and by what their parents have told them about school. One six-year old girl went with the examiner to the room where the test was being given, but refused to say a word. The examiner saw the child's eyes following her as she laid out the crayons and colored cars, and one small hand darted out to touch the bright red and black checkers. But the girl kept her lips pursed and did not respond when the examiner spoke to her. After a considerable length of time the examiner decided it was fruitless to continue; she said good-naturedly that she hoped the child would decide to come in later to complete the test, and took her back to her room.

The teacher said the child had never spoken in class, and reminding herself that the child's eleven-year old aunt was a student in a fourth-grade remedial class, sent the examiner upstairs to meet the aunt. The eleven-year old was very shy, but under the gentle questioning of the examiner revealed that the child lived in a three-room house with fifteen brothers, sisters and cousins, a sick mother, and the young aunt. Ever since she could remember, the mother would tell the children when they became noisy: "You just wait til you get to school. The teacher will whup you if you open your mouth! You just wait!"

Nor was this harried mother the only parent whose warnings served to frighten her children about school. One question on the inventory was: "What does a teacher do?" Among children from low-income families whose parents had had little education, the answer most often was: "A teacher whips you." Among higher income children, the most frequent answer was: "A teacher teaches you stuff."

Some children will not come to school unless mother or an older sibling comes and stays with them. When no one in the family comes, the child stays home. This is true not only the first week (when even middle-class children are likely to cling to their parents), but all six or eight weeks of the Head Start program. "How ready is a child for school," asked one teacher, "when he cannot be away from his mother even four hours a day? And how ready is the mother to have him in school when she allows him to stay home for any number of reasons - rain, cold weather, hot weather, not enough sleep because of a late TV program, or just simply because the child doesn't feel like coming?" Although many children learn during the Head Start program the pleasures of school and the necessity for regular attendance, many others need a longer and more intensive Head Start program before they and their families understand even the attendance requirements.

Down to the hard road.

Regular attendance is difficult for many children. Some live miles from the nearest school bus stop on roads that are passable only part of the year. Some children are absent after heavy rains because they must walk along roads which dip near creek beds and become flooded. At one school we

found only children from town. The early morning rain (which had not seemed particularly heavy) had "washed out" the roads which the lower income children travelled to reach the school bus. The principal said it would probably be two days before the smaller children would be able to walk those roads.

Some children can reach the bus stop only by walking on narrow winding roads which have no berms and afford no protection from cars which careen around blind curves.

And an example of isolation: This is the home address for one child, listed on the record card - "Second side road past cemetery, over the ridge, dirt road to right after boarded-up church. Only house on the road." Another - "Across railroad tracks at Texaco station, second pond after dirt road, trailer set in back of orchard."

<u>These must be taught.</u>

Unless one has worked with children from isolated communities it is difficult to understand how very many things they must be taught in school. In several counties, teachers and aides told us they had to show children how to use commodes. "This is the first indoor plumbing a lot of them have ever seen. Some simply don't believe us when we tell them how it works. They keep looking for a place out back."

Many hours may be spent in the bathrooms, teaching elementary hygiene. In one school, a teacher stood at the door giving two squares of toilet paper and one paper towel to each child who entered. A chunk of rough brown soap, unpleasant to the touch, was on the single sink, and the children, in assembly-line fashion, were directed to the commodes (four in a row, with no dividing curtains or booths), and to the sink. Children who held back, perhaps from modesty, were pushed forward. An aide said

she had noticed girls with holes in their underwear trying to hide from the gaze of the others lined up for their turn.

In a few schools there was no soap at all, no toilet paper, a very limited supply of paper towels. "We tell them to wash up before meals," said a teacher, "but a fine example we set."

The lesson may be painful.

Cleanliness must be taught many children. Youngsters step from the school bus in the morning looking as if they have spent several nights in their clothes - which they may have - with the smudges of yesterday's spaghetti lunch and the day before yesterday's water colors still on faces or arms. One principal, a particularly sympathetic and conscientious man, expressed concern that teachers sometimes judged the children by their appearance, and tended to reject those who did not look freshly washed and laundered. He said: "We're making nervous wrecks out of some of the kids. We tell them to wash up, to get clean and stay clean, and to get their clothes laundered. Then at home their mothers yell they are using all the water - which has to be carried in buckets a good long way up or down hill - and wearing out their clothes by washing them. One boy came crying to me that his father refused to buy any soap so how could he get clean? And in some families, parents say it's a choice between buying beans or buying soap. What would you tell them?"

In that particular school, some teachers bought soap and towels with their own money, then put them in individual packets with the child's name on. A youngster could slip into the room before class, get his packet, and wash up before school began. In that school, also, and in a few others, children without shoes went barefoot without self-consciousness. In other

schools, with other principals and another spirit, children without shoes were sent home "to get properly dressed." Sometimes these children did not return. A social worker on the staff of a local community action program reported in one instance: "There are five children in this family, and one pair of shoes. If Jane can't come barefoot, she won't be able to come more than one day in five."

A principal whose respect and love for the children were reflected throughout his school's program in spite of ancient rooms, dark corridors and limited equipment stated that unthinking people sometimes act as if these children prefer being dirty and poorly dressed. "A lot of boys and girls in our grade school are embarrassed to death by the way they look and the way they dress. They work hard to take care of themselves, against odds you can hardly imagine. I've seen an eighth grade girl cry because someone stole her comb and she didn't know how she could get another one. Last year, a seventh grade boy walked to school an hour early to help the janitor and earn money for soap, towels, tooth paste and tooth brushes for himself and four younger brothers and sisters. That's what I call character." The principal sighed. "Of course sometimes I get discouraged. I went to visit a family where the kids just didn't seem to have anything at all. The house was a mess, there were chickens running around inside, and there was the mother lying on a rickety couch watching a quiz program on the largest color TV set I have ever seen." He shook his head. "I believe in television, mind you. It's the only teacher some of these people have. But <u>color</u> TV, and brand new at that when the children were in rags!"

Special Need: Speech Therapy.

One important part of the Head Start program is the physical examination given children from low-income families. Sometimes this is the very first time the child has been examined by a physician. In every county, children have been found with serious physical ailments which require early attention. Physicians also examined the children's teeth where no dentists were available for this task. (A great many children have never seen a dentist. If you ask them who takes care of teeth, they either say they don't know, or tell you that a doctor examines teeth.)

A striking need in virtually every school we visited was for speech therapy. Some speech problems were the marks of the culturally deprived: children who had no experience in speaking in full sentences, who pointed or grunted when they wanted something, who did not know the words for even common objects. These children need practice in conversation, practice which can be gotten only in small groups or in individual instruction. It is possible that help could be gotten from volunteers in the community who would require only a short training period before assuming responsibility for part of this essential task.

More skilled help will be required for those children who have pronounced lisps or other impediments, or who seem able to speak only in "baby talk." One principal whose students came mostly from isolated rural families told us he could use a full-time therapist for his school alone.

Speech impediments, incidentally, were by no means confined to children from low-income families. Probably due to the lack of trained therapists throughout the state, a large number of children from more privileged families

are also disadvantaged because of difficulties in speech. Clearly, there is no prospect of getting trained therapists for most of these schools. Yet the need is so great that bold steps must be taken to provide services.

A suggestion: professional speech therapists should be called upon to program the various steps in treatment to see which could be performed by sub-professionals. The military long ago discovered that young technicians could do many tasks ordinarily thought of as the prerogative of physicians and nurses (including giving shots, running various tests, etc.); social work agencies have begun to assign some responsibilities to local people who interview clients and act as intermediaries with the agencies. In the same way, it is probable that many parts of a speech therapy program could be assigned to interested persons with much less than the full course of professional training. Indeed, a technician's post in this field might be a very satisfactory career for young people who go no further than high school. From what we observed in the seven counties, there would be no danger of unemployment.

A Popular Program

In our visits to the seven counties we talked to parents, to members of Community Action Programs and to other community leaders whenever possible, as well as to principals, teachers, aides, cooks and janitors. There is widespread enthusiasm for Head Start. Even those who oppose other projects in the war against poverty accept Head Start as an essential part of the state's responsibility for the welfare of its young. One businessman in a small town upstate seemed to sum up majority opinion: "The only thing I could say against it (Head Start) is that it doesn't go on long enough.

These kids need more time to get ready for school. Maybe if we get them early enough, we won't have so many of them deciding that they've had enough on their sixteenth birthday." He nodded to a cluster of boys lounging on the steps of the courthouse. "I expect we'll have to be supporting most of them when they can't get jobs. I don't mind seeing money spent on the little ones. There's time to see they make something of themselves."

There were a remarkable number of comments from local people that they felt the program should be open to everyone, regardless of income, for in most towns there are no nursery schools or kindergartens, and there was general acceptance of the idea that at least one year of school before first grade would be desirable for all children.

There is no longer any need to justify kindergarten as part of the regular elementary school program. A year of preparation for first grade is widely accepted by authorities as essential. Indeed, the absence of public kindergartens in West Virginia puts us with a minority of states, most of them with educational programs not noted for excellence.

Head Start, it must be remembered, is <u>in addition to</u> kindergarten in most parts of the country. Most of the children we tested in West Virginia were already six years old; we saw many who were 6½ without ever having been to school. National norms for the test begin for the child of 4½ who, after a summer in Head Start, will probably go into kindergarten and then first grade.

Yet There Are Problems

Those of us on the travelling team who visited the twenty-six schools in seven counties were most enthusiastic about Head Start. We found it easy to agree with those who saw the program for pre-schoolers as a key part of the war against poverty and ignorance. We were pleased that it was offered in all fifty-five counties.

Yet some of the ways the program was being carried on troubled us. We point these out because Head Start is an action program which is being changed as experience dictates. In our travels we were in a unique position to see some places where change is indicated, and we feel a responsibility to state our observations frankly.

Drop-out at age six?

In several schools we found that many low income children, signed up for Head Start, came only a few times. Their names were still on the attendance sheets, and they were being counted in total enrollment, yet teachers did not expect them to return to class. In all too many cases, no one had gone to the child's home to inquire about him, and neither the child nor his family had any indication that the school was eager to have him continue. For some of these young drop-outs, then, Head Start had not helped bridge the gap between home and school but had, perhaps, reinforced the fear of school or the feelings of inadequacy so many of these children have regarding school.

We also felt that in a few places no real attempt had been made to get the most needy children into Head Start. Teachers made the rounds once but did not reach some areas, or met families with whom they were unable to

communicate. This comment is taken in toto from a teacher's written report on her visit: "I wouldn't go into that house. It looked disgusting. I stayed on the porch. They decided not to send their child to Head Start. They don't care about school."

Needed: local support.

In another area, the Head Start coordinator spoke with a father who was suspicious of the program. After a special trip to the school and several discussions with the teachers and principal, the father not only brought his own child into the center but persuaded several other families in his Hollow to send their children.

Perhaps Head Start would be wise to adopt the techniques of community action groups which seek out and encourage local participation in programs. Undoubtedly there are fathers and mothers living in deprived areas who would be excellent intermediaries between the schools and the families, and would be able to help both in initial enrollment and in follow-up to assure that the children stay in Head Start until the term is over.

In several schools, the real though unofficial links between children and teachers were the cooks, local people themselves. These women often were able to ease the transition from home to away-from-home. One cook told us that the first week of school she prepared only hot dogs and beans "because that's what they're used to." By the second week they were willing to taste vegetables and by the third week they were enjoying an unfamiliar stew. This was in contrast to a school where the principal set the menu in traditional fashion, and several children who refused to eat were told to clean off their plates or not return to class.

Head Start or first grade?

A child taking the Caldwell test was painstakingly coloring the geometric figures. When the examiner told him it wasn't necessary to stay inside the square (the test actually was for color recognition), he replied: "Oh, yes it is! Teacher will kill me if I color outside the lines!"

One teacher was working her way through the alphabet - children were studying the letter "L" the day we were there. Several teachers were using reading readiness books and workbooks usually seen in first grade. One took pride in the color charts hanging on the blackboard. "I've only drilled a few days, and most of my children now can pick out their colors quick as a wink!"

In one Head Start center, an elaborate display of "student work" was laid out for our approval: large papier-maché horses, in brilliant shades of purple and green, each perfectly molded and balanced. The principal cleared his throat in embarrassment when one of the college students questioned whether pre-schoolers could - or should - do this work. "Well, I guess they might have gotten a little help from their teacher. But anyway, it kept her happy."

While it is undoubtedly true that some children were ready for color charts and alphabets, most were not. Particularly unready was the deprived youngster who needed, most of all, to feel that he could succeed in school, although older siblings and his parents had not. By giving this new and ill-prepared student regular first grade tasks, the teacher was unwittingly proving to the child that he was no different from his kin, that he, too, was destined to fail.

Sometimes, teachers commented to us about a child: "He won't be any good in school. I had his older brothers and sisters, and they weren't any good." This inheritance of failure, this expectation of defeat, is a large burden to place on the shoulders of the five- or six-year old. Children attending a program paid for by Office of Economic Opportunity funds, designed for needy youngsters, have a right to classes operated in the expectation of success. Indeed, our travels were made bright by visits to classrooms where success was the watchword. We hope that in other classes and in other schools the expectation of success can also become a reality.

Middle-class ways.

Sociologists contrast what middle-class parents tell their children about school with what under-privileged parents tell their children. A middle-class child is told to work hard and get good grades. He is told to enjoy himself and to be successful so that his parents can be proud of him. An under-privileged child is told to be quiet and to stay out of trouble and not to get his parents in trouble. School matters are to remain in school; he is told not to bother his parents.

Whatever he is told about school at home, the deprived child is exposed to middle-class ways at school, and, almost inevitably, judged by middle-class standards. Middle-class manners, sometimes almost in caricature, are emphasized by a few teachers. In a Head Start Center with a large percentage of children from remote areas who were having their first experience in town, a teacher spent twenty minutes the very hot and muggy morning we were there teaching "drinking fountain etiquette." As the youngsters trooped in from the playground, she lined up all the girls in

single file, then all the boys, and lectured to them about the mannerly way of sipping water without wetting one's chin. "Ladies and gentlemen are not sloppy," she said to the squirming, thirsty, captive audience. And for the girls she had special instructions on how to lean over the faucet while simultaneously holding their skirts down. By the time it was the boys' turn they were frantic, but the teacher said heartily: "Now, doesn't it feel fine to be little ladies and gentlemen?"

Some suggested changes.

Before Head Start can fulfill its goal of reaching the most culturally deprived and the most needy, several changes are indicated.

1. Special recruitment of staff may be necessary when regular first and second grade teachers are uncomfortable with these neediest children. Although many of the teachers we observed were outstanding, others made very clear that they liked being with the clean, responsive, bright middle-class children and resented the other students. The culturally deprived child may not be so clean, nor so immediately responsive, and bright in ways not always apparent in conventional classrooms. The point is not to drive middle-class children out - for no one can say that West Virginia over-educates its citizens - but to face the question of meeting the special needs of the children for whom, after all, Head Start was designed.

2. Much more attention must be given during the teacher training period to differences in cultural backgrounds, and to an appreciation of the worth of other cultures. Teachers who can see no further than a bare-foot child in patched, too-long trousers, will never know that the boy could whittle a quite good horse, and that in the local Holiness church he is

considered a remarkably good singer for his age, knowing dozens of gospel songs and singing them enthusiastically, although the teacher told the writer that the child was "dumb."

Even good teachers need a reminder about cultural differences, differences which can be spelled out without being labelled better or worse, good or undesirable. A recent report on some young Alaskan Eskimos in the Job Corps told how fellow students from the mid-west laughed when the Eskimo girls were frightened by city buses and confused by dial telephones and soft-drink machines. The laughing stopped when the teacher had the young women describe life in their rugged homeland, and then asked the Mainland students how they thought they would fare in such an environment. Although the culturally deprived children in our state may not offer quite this contrast, it is certainly true that they have many skills not shared by middle-class city children, and have values and standards worthy of respect.

3. Some teachers need help in planning their time so that a fair proportion is spent with children with special needs. Classes we visited were limited to 15 children; there was always one aide assigned, and occasionally there were two. Yet in the fourth and fifth weeks of Head Start there were teachers who were surprised when we questioned them about children with severe speech defects. "I never noticed that," was the reply we were given several times. Yet the speech defect was so pronounced that if the teacher had talked at all to the child - and listened - she would have heard it.

We visited classes where culturally deprived children were present, but never in the group clustered around the teacher. This may not have been the teacher's preference, but some must be reminded to seek out the neediest children.

Head Start - An Essential Program

To state the problems which were apparent as we made our visits to the twenty-six Head Start Centers is not to charge Head Start with failure. Quite the contrary. We label the Head Start program a success.

We finished our assignment with fresh respect for principals and teachers who have kept their enthusiasm alive and their goals set high. We were touched by the enthusiasm of one principal and his three teachers who asked whether we would stay after school to speak about the children who had taken the tests. For several hours - ending the session only when it was time for us to drive to another town - they talked about the children, showing great insight into problems and genuine concern for the youngsters. This was a school servicing some of the most deprived children in the state, yet for principal and teachers, assignment there was an opportunity and a challenge.

We appreciated the dedication of a principal who observed the college students as they carried out their assignments, and then tried to convince several of them that they should come to his county and teach school immediately after graduation. He told us he did not have a single teacher under the age of 50 "except for one, and she's getting ready to leave." He showed us a letter from Florida, dated only the month before, offering him a position at a substantial increase in salary and fringe benefits. He

was sitting at his desk in a crowded second-floor office which doubled as a store-room and library. His desk was placed so that he could look out the window at terraced hills stretching miles into the horizon. "I truly get my strength from those hills," he said. "I couldn't live away from here." He swung around in his chair and slapped his hand on the desk. "But that doesn't mean I don't get mighty impatient! We have some of the finest youngsters in the state in this building right this minute, and we're short-changing every one of them."

We enjoyed meeting the high school coach who, on his own time, took all Head Start classes to the local pool. "Some of these kids had never even been in a bath tub, and all of a sudden there is this big pool. Buddy, you should have seen them paddling around!" His only regret was that he would be able to take the children only once more during the summer, hardly enough time to teach most of them to swim. "And teaching them to swim is as important as teaching them to read and write. In this county we have kids drown in the creek every year, lots of them in only a couple of feet of water. I look upon a swimming class as a real life saver." He asked us to tell people - to tell the Governor - that it wouldn't cost much money to teach every child in West Virginia who lived near the water how to swim. We promised we would tell the Governor.

The travelling team is now disbanding as another college year begins. The Head Start assignment took some of these college students - native West Virginians - to parts of the state they had never seen before. Almost like visitors from another region, they talked repeatedly of the great beauty of the land, the warmth of the people, the charm of the children. They were

proud of the good things they saw, and were impatient with some others. Throughout the weeks on the road, and back in the Department of Mental Health office scoring the tests, they talked about the children, discussed what they had seen, argued about what they thought could be improved.

The greatest disagreement came on the question: "Should Head Start include children from culturally privileged as well as culturally deprived families?" Finally, most of the team agreed that Head Start should include all pre-school children IF - and some on the team said the word in loud voices - IF the neediest children are not neglected. If schools cannot handle a wide range of talent and ability, let Head Start be confined to the least privileged. Kindergarten would be for everyone, as an essential prelude to first grade.

To the question: "Should Head Start go on?", a comment by one student summed up the feelings of the team. "Head Start <u>has</u> to go on," she said. "It's just that in some schools, in some counties, it has to go on <u>better</u>."

West Virginia
Department of Mental Health

Head Start Centers, Children Tested

Summer, 1966

School	OEO Children	State Children	Total
BARBOUR COUNTY			
Belington	16	8	24
Philippi	16	11	27
	32	19	51
BRAXTON COUNTY			
Davis, Gassaway	16	13	29
Sutton	19	14	33
Upper Frametown	6	8	14
	41	35	76
CABELL COUNTY			
Monroe, Huntington	25	26	51
Oley, Huntington	29	13	42
Ona	5	15	20
Peyton, Huntington	18	15	33
	77	69	146
GRANT COUNTY			
Maysville	11	6	17
Petersburg	17	8	25
	28	14	42
McDOWELL COUNTY			
Crumpler	5	10	15
Ieager	23	8	31
Newhall	15	7	22
War	20	5	25
Welch	19	10	29
	82	40	122

West Virginia
Department of Mental Health

Head Start Centers, Children Tested

Summer, 1966

School	OEO Children	State Children	Total
RALEIGH COUNTY			
Institute, Beckley	41	16	57
Mark Twain, Stotesbury	21	5	26
Maxwell Hill, Beckley	0	20	20
Mt. View, Dry Creek	16	5	21
Pettus	1	9	10
Richmond, Shady Springs	10	1	11
Sophia	9	15	24
Stanaford	21	5	26
	119	76	195
WETZEL COUNTY			
Brooklyn, New Martinsville	10	15	25
Burton	10	8	18
	20	23	43
TOTALS	399	276	675

West Virginia
Department of Mental Health

Travelling Team, Head Start Testing

Summer, 1966

Student	College
Barger, Linda	West Virginia University
Cabell, James	Marshall University
Claytor, Jane	West Virginia University
Faber, Susan	Morris Harvey College
Harris, Cona	West Virginia State College
Howard, Janet	West Virginia University
Kurtz, Dan	Oberlin College, Ohio
McLaughlin, Karen	West Virginia University
Phalen, Terry	West Virginia University
Pressman, Karen	Ohio State University
Watkins, Delores	Fisk University, Tennessee
———	
Southworth, Sharon, Mrs.	Teacher, Monongalia County
———	

Mrs. Louise B. Gerrard, Research Analyst,
West Virginia Department of Mental Health

Head Start, West Virginia, Summer, 1966

Psychological Evaluation,

Special Assignment of the West Virginia Department of Mental Health

Robert D. Kerns, Ph.D.
Associate Supervisor, Division of Professional Services

In the early summer of 1966 the West Virginia Department of Mental Health was asked to undertake a program of psychological evaluation of children enrolled in Headstart programs in a seven county demonstration area. In these seven counties state funds were allocated to supplement the federally-supported program in order to permit enrollment of children who, because of family income in excess of the "poverty level", were not otherwise eligible. The purpose in permitting enrollment of the latter group was to obtain some base-line data on whether these children, as well as children from economically deprived homes, would derive benefit from a pre-school program and, if so, to what extent. Some of the problems inherent in the inclusion of this group in the program are discussed in the narrative evaluation prepared by Mrs. Louise Gerrard, Research and Statistical Analyst.

It was immediately apparent, in planning for the evaluation program, that the tests to be utilized would have to meet the basic criteria of economy, brevity and ease of administration. Since untrained college students were to be used as examiners, it was necessary that the tests selected be of a kind which such students could learn to administer in a single training session. The Caldwell Achievement Test, an experimental instrument which had been used successfully in a nationwide test program

during the previous summer, seemed to meet all these criteria. In addition, a fairly adequate supply of these tests was already available. A second test, the Draw-A-Person Test, which consists merely of asking the child to make a free-hand drawing of a human figure, and which yields a reasonably valid estimate of intellectual functioning, was also decided upon. This test has usually been considered relatively free of the influences of culture, environment and previous learning, and has also been considered useful in revealing at least gross personality disorders.

Several difficulties were encountered in test administration and evaluation, particularly in relation to the Draw-A-Person Test. First, it was not made adequately clear to the students administering the test that a complete human figure was required and that "stick" figures or a partial figure such as a head only, were not acceptable, no matter how well drawn. Many drawings obtained were, therefore, either unscorable or nearly so. Secondly, it became clear that this instrument is not nearly so culture-free as has often been supposed, and that children who have had little, if any, previous practice in the use of a pencil have great difficulty executing what appears, at first glance, as a simple and undemanding task. Results on this test were probably also, to an unknown extent, reduced by such factors as test anxiety, fear of the situation or, in some instances, poor motivation.

The assumption had been made that intelligence, as measured by the Draw-A-Person, and achievement, as measured by the Caldwell Achievement Test, would be closely related. The test results, however, revealed

little better than a chance relationship between the two tests, and it was abundantly clear that they measured quite separate functions. It is hypothesized that the Caldwell is primarily a measure of the degree to which the child has learned various facts about his environment, his ability to retain information given him, and his ability to solve simple problems. The Draw-A-Person, on the other hand, appears to measure perceptual and motor skills, both of which are readily influenced by extraneous factors such as distractions, poor motivation or emotional interferences.

Despite the fact that the Draw-A-Person appears to have generally underestimated general intellectual capacity, the overall findings indicate a clear deficit, both in achievement and intellectual functioning, for the economically deprived child when compared with the child from a more affluent home environment. For the total group of 675 Headstart children, we find a mean percentile score of 44 on the Caldwell and a mean I.Q. of 86. Separating out those children supported by the OEO program, we find that the Caldwell now yields a mean score at the 36th percentile and a mean I.Q. of 83. The children supported by state funds, on the other hand, show a mean percentile score of 56 on the Caldwell and a mean I.Q. of 90 on the Draw-A-Person.

	Draw-A-Person (I.Q.)	Caldwell (Percentile Score)
OEO only	83	36
State only	90	56
Combined groups	86	44

Those children who were supported by state funds and who presumably are from more affluent homes where they have been offered more cultural advantages and intellectual stimulation are able to function on a much higher level in terms of both types of measure. If it can safely be assumed that there is a direct relationship between economic status and academic potential, a hypothesis which appears to be supported by the present findings, a further sorting of the study group should show an even greater degree of deficit for the "Poverty" group. That is, if the 10 percent who were included under the federal program but who are beyond the allowable income limits, were removed from the sample OEO population, and the state supported children who actually meet the lower income criteria were removed from the "State" sample, I.Q. and achievement test scores should rise in the latter group and fall even further in the OEO sample.

There seems no doubt, on the basis of these findings, that children from economically deprived homes come to the school system poorly prepared to compete with their more affluent schoolmates in an academic setting. There is certainly ample evidence that this inability to compete frequently results in failure, frustration and a constantly widening disparity between the intellectual and academic achievements of the two groups. There is at least suggestive evidence, moreover, that intellectual deficits arising from cultural deprivations tend to become irreversible at a relatively early age. The Headstart program, of course, is intended to offer a means of overcoming such deficits.

While the value of this program is unquestionable, however, it appears in many instances to be too little and too late. In the absence of a public school kindergarten system, our children arrive in the Headstart program at or near the age of 6, nearly two years later than is the case in most other states. It is unreasonable to presume that a program of 6 to 8 weeks duration can be fully effective in overcoming the accumulated deficit then existing. The Headstart program must, to realize its potential, begin earlier and last longer. A full year of kindergarten, preceeded by a full summer Headstart program beginning at least by age 4½ would seem to be the minimum adequate preparation for school. Nursery school programs at an even earlier age appear to be required if the cultural deficits mentioned above are to be prevented.